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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 067729

E.O. 11652: GDS

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SUBJECT: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS

1. COUP ATTEMPT FAILS IN THAILAND

RADIO THAILAND ANNOUNCED EARLY MARCH 26 THAT SOLDIERS HEADED BY GENERAL PRASOET THAMMASIRI, DEPUTY COMMANDER OF THE ROYAL THAI ARMY, HAD STAGED A COUP D'ETAT AND DIS-SOLVED THE GOVERNMENT IN THE NAME OF THE "REVOLUTIONARY PARTY." THE BROADCAST CLAIMED THE SUPPORT OF THE ARMY, NAVY AND AIR FORCE, BUT AT NOON (0500 GMT) DEFENSE MINISTER
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ADMIRAL SANGAT CHALOYU APPEARED ON TELEVISION WITH SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS TO STATE THAT THE GOVERNMENT REMAINED IN CONTROL AND WAS NEGOTIATING WITH THE REBELS. EMBASSY BANGKOK BELIEVES THAT AS OF NOON MARCH 26, WHILE THE REBEL GROUP STILL CONTROLS RADIO THAILAND, THEY APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN ISOLATED. AMBASSADOR WHITEHOUSE'S ASSESSMENT IS THAT THE REBELLION, WHICH MAY INVOLVE ONLY 300 MEN, WILL BE PUT

DOWN BY THE GOVERNMENT. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) BANGKOK
6577 AND (CONFIDENTIAL) BANGKOK 6581, 3/26.)

2. PAKISTANI TENSION APPROACHES SHOWDOWN

PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO HAS JAILED THE LEADERS OF THE NINE-PARTY OPPOSITION ALLIANCE AFTER THEY REJECTED HIS LATEST OFFER TO NEGOTIATE, AND EMBASSY ISLAMABAD EXPECTS THE CRACKDOWN TO LEAD TO FURTHER VIOLENCE AND A POSSIBLE SHOWDOWN OVER THE FATE OF THE REGIME. BHUTTO INSTRUCTED PROVINCIAL GOVERNORS TO GIVE ORDERS MARCH 25 FOR POLICE TO SHOOT ON SIGHT ANYONE COMMITTING VIOLENCE, DAMAGING PROPERTY OR DISTURBING COMMUNICATIONS. IN SIND PROVINCE, FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE ORDER TO SHOOT HAS ALSO BEEN GIVEN TO THE ARMY. IN KARACHI, WHERE THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IS SCHEDULED TO CONVENE TODAY, THE OPPOSITION HAS CALLED FOR A MASSIVE DEMONSTRATION HALTING BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE TRANSPORTATION--SETTING THE STAGE FOR A CLASH WITH THE ARMY, WHICH HAS BEEN ORDERED TO SHOOT ON SIGHT ANYONE DISRUPTING TRANSPORTATION. AMERICANS HAVE BEEN ADVISED TO REMAIN AT HOME.

EMBASSY COMMENT: THE LINES HAVE NOW BEEN FIRMLY DRAWN. THE OPPOSITION IS COMMITTED TO BHUTTO'S POLITICAL DEMISE, WHILE HE IS DETERMINED TO RETAIN POWER. THE OUTCOME WILL PROBABLY BE DECIDED IN THE STREETS. (CONFIDENTIAL) ISLAMABAD 2868 AND (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) ISLAMABAD 2869, 3/25.)

3. HUNGARIAN HEARSAY ON SOVIET FEARS CONFIDENTIAL

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EMBASSY BUDAPEST REPORTS THAT CONVERSATIONS WITH RELIABLE HUNGARIAN CONTACTS REVEAL THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW PARTY LINE REFLECTING A SHARP INCREASE IN SOVIET CONCERN OVER THE FUTURE OF DETENTE AND THE US STAND ON HUMAN RIGHTS. THE PICTURE DRAWN BY THE HUNGARIANS, WHO SAY THEIR OWN VIEWS ARE NOT SO PESSIMISTIC, IS OF A GRIM, ALMOST PARANOID SOVIET LEADERSHIP WHICH PERCEIVES A GENUINE THREAT TO ITS POWER AND BELIEVES THAT:

--THE US STAND ON HUMAN RIGHTS IS PART OF A DELIBERATE STRATEGY TO OVERTHROW THE SOVIET REGIME.

--THE ROSSIYA HOTEL FIRE AND THE MOSCOW METRO EXPLOSION ARE EVIDENCE THAT THE WEST IN GENERAL AND THE CIA IN PARTICULAR ARE SWINGING INTO ACTION, GIVING DIRECT SUPPORT TO SOVIET DISSIDENTS TURNED ACTIVE REVOLUTIONARIES.

--EVERY SOVIET DISSIDENT EQUALS A PERSON COMMITTED TO THE VIOLENT OVERTHROW OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT.

EMBASSY COMMENT: WE WOULD HESITATE TO TAKE THESE STATEMENTS SERIOUSLY WERE WE NOT HEARING THEM IN NEARLY IDENTICAL FORMULATION FROM SO MANY SOURCES RELIABLE IN THE PAST. WE BELIEVE THE HUNGARIANS ARE ACCURATELY REFLECTING THE VIBRATIONS FROM MOSCOW, BUT OF COURSE WE CANNOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE SIMPLY ENLISTED THEM TO HELP SCARE THE WEST AWAY FROM ITS HUMAN RIGHTS STANCE. (CONFIDENTIAL) BUDAPEST 989, 3/25.)

4. HESS TO LEAVE SPANDAU FOR HOSPITAL TESTS

OUR MISSION IN BERLIN REPORTS THAT THE FOUR POWER GOVERNORS HAVE AGREED TO TAKE RUDOLF HESS FROM SPANDAU PRISON TO THE BRITISH MILITARY HOSPITAL IN BERLIN ON MARCH 28 TO CONDUCT
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TESTS FOR HIS CHRONIC STOMACH DISORDERS. HESS WILL BE RETURNED TO SPANDAU THE SAME DAY. AS IN HESS' 1973 HOSPITAL VISIT, THE BRITISH WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR SECURITY.

MISSION COMMENT: THE RAPIDITY OF THE SOVIET CONCURRENCE TO THE PRISON DOCTORS' PROPOSAL, WHICH WAS MADE ONLY THURSDAY, MAY BE ATTRIBUTED TO:

--THE GENERALLY COOPERATIVE NATURE OF THE CURRENT SOVIET PRISON DIRECTOR AT SPANDAU; AND

--SOVIET RECOGNITION THAT CRITICISM OF THE FOUR POWERS ON MEDICAL TREATMENT ACCORDED HESS MAY BE LESSENED ONCE WORD OF THE HOSPITAL VISIT LEAKS TO THE PRESS. (CONFIDENTIAL) USBERLIN 859, 3/25.

5. PHILIPPINES: MORE CONCESSIONS TO MINDANAO MOSLEMS?

PRESIDENT MARCOS REMAINS SILENT ON DETAILS OF THE "TENTATIVE SOLUTION" TO THE MINDANAO PROBLEM ANNOUNCED MARCH 22. HOWEVER, A MANILA COLUMNIST, WHO WAS APPARENTLY BRIEFED ON THE AGREEMENT, HAS REPORTED THAT MARCOS, THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE AND QADHAFI "HAVE ALL CONFIRMED" THAT IT INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

--MARCOS WILL FIRST PROCLAIM A MINDANAO AUTONOMOUS REGION.

ON APRIL 17, THE 13 PROVINCES IN THAT AREA WILL VOTE ON WHETHER THEY WISH TO BELONG TO THE REGION.

--THE METHOD FOR TRANSITION TO AN AUTONOMOUS REGION

WILL THEN BE OUTLINED BY A PREPARATORY COMMITTEE.

--FINALLY, A GENERAL ELECTION FOR DELEGATES TO A
REGIONAL ASSEMBLY WILL BE HELD.

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EMBASSY COMMENT: IT IS CLEAR THAT MARCOS IS EXTREMELY
NERVOUS ABOUT PUBLICIZING AN AGREEMENT WHICH, IF CORRECTLY
OUTLINED ABOVE, REPRESENTS GOP BACKTRACKING AND ACCESSION
TO THE MOSLEM DEMAND THAT THE REGION BE DECLARED AUTONO
MOUS PRIOR TO A PLEBISCITE. WE ASSUME THAT WHATEVER REFER-
ENDUM TAKES PLACE AFTER THE DECREE WILL BE MEANINGLESS,
ALTHOUGH IT MIGHT ENABLE THE GOVERNMENT TO CLAIM THAT IT
IS KEEPING ITS WORD ABOUT FOLLOWING CONSTITUTIONAL PRO-
CESSES. SUCH TACTICS WILL NOT FOOL ANYONE, BUT MAY ALLOW
MARCOS TO PREVENT THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE CEASEFIRE UNTIL
AFTER THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE MEETS IN TRIPOLI IN MAY OR
JUNE. (CONFIDENTIAL) MANILA 4278, 3/23 AND 4461, 3/25.)
CHRISTOPHER

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